

ALGERIA

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1 July 2016 – 1 November 2016

KEY FIGURES

90,000

Vulnerable Sahrawi refugees living in five camps near Tindouf.

5,792

Persons of concern in urban areas registered with UNHCR of which 5,217 are Syrian nationals.

On average **148**

Syrians approach UNHCR on a monthly basis for registration

100%

of school-aged children (32,100) in Tindouf camps are enrolled in primary education.

18

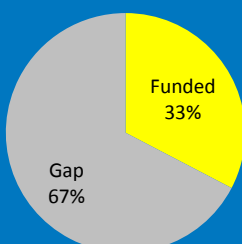
Liters of potable water are available per person per day in Sahrawi refugee camps (below the humanitarian standard of 20 liters/person/day).

FUNDING

USD 29 Million

Requested for the operation

The operation is **33%** funded



HIGHLIGHTS

- In mid-August, a severe wind storm damaged Laayoune camp. **UNHCR provided materials for 333 family tents for families** whose tents were damaged beyond repair by the storm. UNHCR and partners' response also included repair of a water reservoir and an ambulance as well as distribution of soap and bleach. In the meantime, **shelter rehabilitation** efforts

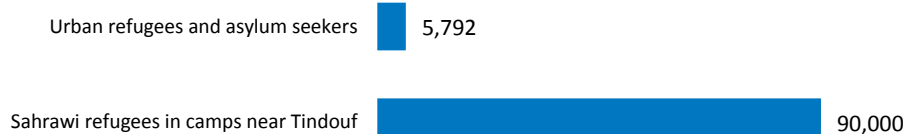


A family among the storm damage during the multi-agency assessment in Laayoune camp. ©

- continued for those impacted by the October 2015 floods, with affected families re-building their homes thanks to UNHCR-provided construction materials (see below 'Emergency Floods Response').
- On 19 September 2016, a **multi-agency donors briefing** on the humanitarian situation of Sahrawi refugee in refugee camps near Tindouf was held for the international and diplomatic community in Algiers. The briefing was held by the four UN agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO) and humanitarian organizations active in Tindouf. It was an occasion to present the humanitarian situation in the camps and to appeal to donors to address critical gaps in key sectors. Attendance from the diplomatic and donor community was high, with 27 diplomatic representations in attendance, including representation from the Algerian authorities.
- In September, two refugees departed for **resettlement** to Sweden. Their story is featured on page seven of this Update (see Annex). In October, 13 refugees were resettled to the United States of America.

Population of concern

A total of **95,792** people of concern



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

UNHCR's activities in Algeria focus on assistance provision to the Sahrawi refugee community who live in a protracted displacement situation in five camps near Tindouf. In addition, UNHCR registers, processes asylum claims and provides targeted assistance to persons of concern in the urban context in Algiers.

In Algiers, the UNHCR Office continues to register and provide documentation to asylum-seekers from Syria, Yemen, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroun, Mali and other countries of origin. The total number of refugees recognized under UNHCR's mandate stands at 222. Based on the Government of Algeria's estimates, there are over 40,000 Syrians in the country; less than 13% of this total number is registered as asylum-seekers with UNHCR - UNHCR does not conduct status determination for Syrian asylum-seekers.

In Tindouf, UNHCR continues to provide protection and undertake care and maintenance activities for 90,000 vulnerable Sahrawi refugees living in all the camps. Of particular concern in 2015 was the impact of funding shortfalls on food distribution; despite fundraising efforts, WFP had to reduce the monthly food ration distributed in 2015, thus affecting nutritional levels of Sahrawi refugees. This continues to be a concern this year. In 2016, UNHCR continues its rehabilitation plan following the October 2015 floods which devastated all five refugee camps destroying the mud-brick homes of 17,841 families and affecting 60% per cent of public buildings. In addition to the rehabilitation/reconstruction of five schools, UNHCR's is reconstructing shelters for some of most vulnerable refugees, and is providing materials to other affected families to rebuild their damaged houses.

In 2016, while continuing to provide essential humanitarian assistance, UNHCR in coordination with WFP and the Sahrawi refugee community will strengthen livelihoods initiatives, in particular for the youth. This includes three main components: youth empowerment, technical skills development and access to income-generating projects.

Achievements

Protection

Achievements and Impact

Algiers

- A series of focus group discussions were conducted in furtherance to the Community-Based Protection approach: 47 urban refugees from sub-Saharan countries, of various profile and background, participated over 4 days in August. Discussions were held in order to consult refugees to find solutions to the various difficulties they face.
- From July to September, 351 individuals were registered by UNHCR, of which 255 were Syrian nationals. Since the beginning of the year, on average 148 Syrians have approached UNHCR on a monthly basis for registration.



UNHCR Protection Officer discuss with a refugee and his three children during a Family Focus Group Discussion. © UNHCR / V. Hartl

Tindouf



Youth Consultations in August, UNHCR Conference Room, Rabouni © UNHCR / K. Tarouadada

■ UNHCR, in collaboration with the refugee leadership, organized a Youth Consultation Forum in Rabouni in August 2016. In total, 17 young representatives participated. The Consultations consist of a series of national consultations and one global consultation, held from June to August 2016, where selected refugee youth representatives from the national consultations finalized a set of Core Actions for Refugee Youth and presented their recommendations to UNHCR and other stakeholders. The lessons learned from the Consultations will contribute to guidelines and policy recommendations on youth-inclusive protection programming.

■ UNHCR met with the 25 outreach workers and partner *Movimiento por la Paz* (MPDL) to strengthen the referral mechanism for individual cases and to

define the scope of work for the outreach workers.

- UNHCR, in collaboration with the refugee leadership active in the legal system, conducted a training for the staff managing the centres for vulnerable groups (including women and children). The training focused on procedural standards and code of conduct for staff working in the legal system.
- On 9-13 October, UNHCR multifunctional teams conducted an Age, Gender and Diversity Participatory Assessment.

Education

Achievements and Impact

Algiers

- All school-aged refugee children continue to have free access to and are enrolled in school. UNHCR provides transport, school supplies and a daily meal to refugee children.

Tindouf

- The new school year began on 6 September 2016 for all the camps; with all children of school age (32,100) enrolled both at primary and intermediate levels. This was possible despite the August 2016 storm due to the extensive rehabilitation efforts of UNHCR – through its partner *Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli* (CISP) – and UNICEF. UNHCR has rehabilitated four schools and is completely reconstructing a fifth school of 12 classrooms in Smara refugee camp. The school was damaged during the October 2015 flooding and thorough assessment revealed that it was safer to rebuild it completely. The new school is expected to be completed by the end of 2016.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Algiers: Language barrier is a challenge, most notably for children without a good command of Arabic, as there is only one public school teaching in French.

Health

Achievements and Impact

Algiers

- Refugees in Algiers and other urban centres enjoy the same free access to public health-care facilities including for HIV/AIDS and acute respiratory infection (ARI) treatment as Algerian nationals. A medical doctor working with UNHCR's partner 'Caritas' carries out health checks, counselling and ensures referral to public health institutions. UNHCR also covers the cost of certain medicines for refugees and the most vulnerable asylum-seekers such as laboratory tests and X-Rays which are not provided free of charge.

Tindouf

- UNHCR, through partner CISP, organized a training session in each five camp on psychosocial support for primary school children. Five psychologists were contracted in order to start the implementation of this psycho-pedagogic intervention as of September 2016.
- UNHCR, through its health partners, provided logistics support for two multidisciplinary medical commissions which provided over the summer specialized health care services for the benefit of around 1,810 refugees.
- UNHCR, through *Triangle Génération Humanaire* (TGH), procured a new X-Ray machine to reinforce the diagnosis services provided at the central hospital of the camps.
- A two-week training on SENS (Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey) was provided to 42 health staff by two international consultants contracted by UNHCR and WFP.
- The implementation of the 2016 nutrition survey started in the last week of September and is to be concluded by mid-November. The exercise consists of one survey in each camp. Around 2,500 households will be surveyed for food security, food diversification, infant and young child feeding (IYCF), WASH, malnutrition, anemia, and risk of chronic diseases. Preliminary results are to be shared before the end of the year.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Algiers:** Due to limited funding, UNHCR can only cover a limited amount of the costs of medical assistance to the most vulnerable asylum-seekers.
- Tindouf:** The chronic under-funding situation in Tindouf camps has gradually deteriorated, hampering monthly food distribution; this is undermining on-going efforts to combat malnutrition levels in the camps.



Water and Sanitation (WASH)

Achievements and Impact

Tindouf

- Drilling of the new borehole in Smara is ongoing, and so far the depth reached is 88 meters. The optimum capacity of the borehole has not yet been reached.
- A new generator was purchased and installed in the Smara water system, which allows the functioning in parallel of both existing osmosis stations.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The average 18 litres per person and per day distributed to Sahrawi refugees is below the international minimum standard of 20 litres per person per day. Extending the water system network, improving sources of water and strengthening waste management system are essential, especially considering the harsh environment.

Shelter and NFIs

Achievements and Impact

Algiers

- UNHCR provides shelter, a monthly food basket and non-food items (NFIs) to some 100 urban refugee families, based on vulnerability assessments.

Tindouf

- In mid-August, a severe wind storm damaged Laayoune camp. UNHCR provided materials for 333 family tents for families whose tents were damaged beyond repair by the storm.
- UNHCR, through its partners, repaired the water reservoir and an ambulance, and distributed soap and bleach.



Two Sahrawi women carry away tent materials at the tent distribution. © UNHCR / K. Tarouadada

Emergency Floods Response

During the reporting period, about 500 families affected by the October 2015 flooding received construction materials from UNHCR to assist them either to rehabilitate or to reconstruct their damaged or destroyed shelters. As of 30 September, a total of 23,000 bags of cement (1,150 metric tonnes), 2,700 pieces of timber beams and 4,000 sheets of corrugated metal were distributed to these 500 families. Regular field visits allow UNHCR to monitor the progress in reconstruction and rehabilitation. The targeted number of families to reach is 2,000 families in total, out of which 767 families have fully received all the materials at September's end.

UNHCR and partners are also constructing 165 shelters for persons with specific needs. Initially, it was planned to construct 200 shelters for this vulnerable group. Due to the increase of the local cost of construction materials, however, only 165 shelters will be constructed. The procurement process has been completed and actual construction works are ongoing.

During the emergency, there were several public infrastructures that were either badly damaged or destroyed. With limited funding, UNHCR had to prioritize the rehabilitation of schools over other public buildings to enable the children to have better learning environments and to start the new school year as planned. Initially, 10 schools (of approximately 50 classrooms total) were to be rehabilitated. After a more detailed assessment conducted by UNHCR and its partner of 10 schools initially identified, however, and taking into consideration refugee priorities, it was decided to entirely reconstruct one school and to rehabilitate four others. Rehabilitation of the four schools is completed and the fifth one is currently being completely reconstructed in a new location.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

Achievements and Impact

Tindouf

- Last year, UNHCR and Oxfam launched an appeal for projects within the camps, as proposed by groups of youth, which would have positive social impact on the community and be sustainable in the long term. A total of 10 projects were selected (two per camp), and seven of the 10 are active as of end of September: an IT centre, a tutoring centre, a hair salon, a poultry farm, an agricultural garden, a pizzeria, and a sweetshop ('pâtisserie'). The remaining three (driver education centre, mill, and child friendly space) will be operational during the last quarter of 2016.
- UNHCR, its partners and the Sahrawi leadership in charge of water and environmental issues celebrated World Environment Day on 15 September in Laayoune camp. The celebration consisted of a symbolic cleaning campaign and the presentation of certificates and gifts to volunteer garbage collectors in the five camps.

Durable Solutions

Achievements and Impact

Algiers

- UNHCR is seeking durable solutions for refugees in Algeria through assisting voluntary return or resettlement to a third country. In September, two refugees departed for resettlement to Sweden. (See Annex at end of the Update for their story.) In October, 13 refugees departed for resettlement to the United States of America. So far in 2016, 16 people in total were resettled to third countries with UNHCR support.

Working in Partnership

- UNHCR's Government counterpart is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Division for Human Rights, Social Development and Cultural, Scientific and Technical Affairs. UNHCR also works closely with the Bureau for Refugees and Stateless Persons (BAPRA) which falls under the Division of the Legal and Consular Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. UNHCR works with 12 partners in Algeria, with urban refugees in Algiers and the Sahrawi refugee community in Tindouf.
- To support the Sahrawi refugee programmes in Tindouf, UNHCR works closely with the World Food Programme (WFP) for food assistance and with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in health, education and youth activities. UNHCR is the lead humanitarian agency for inter-agency coordination efforts and specifically leads monthly sector coordination meetings for the WASH and Shelter Response sectors, as well as Health in coordination with the Sahrawi refugee community.
- On 19 September, UNHCR with three other UN agencies (UNICEF, WFP and WHO) hosted a multi-agency donor briefing on the Sahrawi refugee humanitarian situation for the international and diplomatic community. Humanitarian organizations active in Tindouf also participated. The briefing presented the humanitarian needs and financial requirements for 2016-17 for the four UN agencies present in the camps and their international partners.
- UNHCR facilitated the visit of a delegation from the United States Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) and the Agency for International Development (USAID) from 17-20 October 2016: the delegation visited 3 Sahrawi camps, with a special focus on UNHCR's livelihoods activities. They met with all humanitarian actors in Tindouf, including the three UN agencies and the Sahrawi leadership. In October, UNHCR also received delegation from the Belgium Parliament and the European Parliament in Rabouni where members of the delegation could meet and discuss with the humanitarian community.
- Together with humanitarian partners, UNHCR met with the UN Head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General when they visited Rabouni on 23 October 2016. Upcoming food pipeline breaks and growing youth frustration were amongst the issues that were raised.

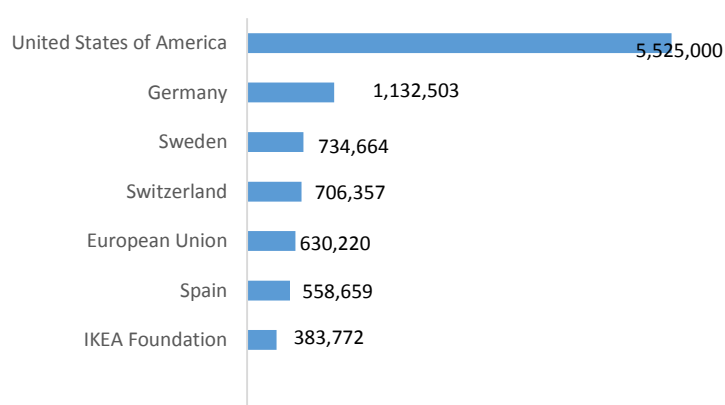
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 9.7 million.**

Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2016:

United States of America (200 M) | Sweden (78 M) | Netherlands (46 M) | Priv Donors Spain (45 M) | Norway (40 M) | Australia (31 M) | Japan (24 M) | Denmark (24 M) | United Kingdom (23 M) | Priv Donors Republic of Korea (17 M) | Priv Donors Italy (16 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | France (14 M) | Priv Donors Japan (13 M) | Germany (13 M) | Priv Donors USA (12 M) | Priv Donors Sweden (12 M) | Italy (10 M)

Funding received in 2016 (USD)



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Annex 1

Congolese Couple Departs for a New Life in Sweden*Algiers, Algeria, 7 September*

Carine and Michel are a Congolese couple with countless talents. Now the duo is bringing their skillsets and rich stories to their new home: Sweden. They both fled their homeland to escape the horrors of the 1997 war and have been refugees ever since.

From the fateful day in 2010 that Carine and Michel met each other in Algiers and ever since, they have been dedicated to empowering one another. Him being wheelchair bound, she assists him in his daily tasks. He in return has supported her through two artistic trainings in Algiers – Fashion Design and Mosaic Crafting - and has encouraged her to pursue her professional aspirations in spite of their challenging situation.

Carine has transformed their cosy apartment in Algiers into a little *atelier* where her inspirations come to life. She handcrafts beautiful bags, designs and sews dresses, and even crafts intricate mosaics. Carine has had several opportunities to display her artwork for locals and refugees alike in exhibitions in Algiers.



Michel and Carine surrounded by their African inspired, elaborately handcrafted artwork in UNHCR's office in Algiers. © UNHCR / V. Hartl

Says Carine, “I want young refugees to know that they shouldn’t be ashamed to be different. You need to accept difficult circumstances and rise above them by creating something positive out of your experiences. Michel and I have used our unusual stories – both the positive and negative parts of it – to craft a unique brand that represents our origins.”

When asked about how they would describe the relationship they have formed with the UNHCR during their last 9 years in Algeria, they both agreed that the organization has played a vital role in their lives. “UNHCR is like a mother and father to us, because its staff has always been there for us. We have consistently been treated with the upmost respect by them. When someone from UNHCR bought just one piece of art from us, it meant more to us than if someone else would have bought every piece we offered.”

Through his Facebook page “Handicapped and Elegant”, Michel shares positive messages on issues concerning impaired people, hoping to empower other handicapped men and women and to spread the message that nothing is impossible when one adopts the right mind-set.

Carine and Michel want to encourage young refugees to utilise their diverse backgrounds and assets despite of the legal obstacles they may face to work; and to take on any and all opportunities that may knock at their door - so they can expand their skillset and enrich the societies they live in.

As for their new chapter in Sweden, where they are being resettled, Carine and Michel are now looking forward to sharing their stories, customs, traditions and artwork with the Swedish people and becoming “sub-Saharan Ambassadors” to Scandinavia.

Resettlement to a third country is one of the durable solutions with which UNHCR assists refugees. For those who can neither go back home nor stay in Algeria, UNHCR is assisting with resettlement to a third country. Last year, UNHCR Algeria helped resettle 15 refugees to a third country, and so far this year, UNHCR has submitted 18 refugees for resettlement, with 15 having already departed.

Other durable solutions for refugees in Algeria include voluntary return whenever possible, or local settlement in Algeria. UNHCR helps with both options.

Story by Victoria-Charlotte Hartl, UNHCR Algiers